

WHEN Sir William Hayter became our Ambassador in Moscow in October, 1953, Mr. Malenkov still seemed to be firmly seated in the saddle. Sir William listened and watched, and then reported that Georgi Malenkov would not stay the course. Now he is helping to guide Messrs. Bulganin and Khrushchev around Great Britain.

Aesthetically the British Embassy building is a superb observation post; and from his private balcony Sir William has an unobstructed view of the Kremlin itself. Even there, however, he has few opportunities of forgetting the severity of the regime with which he must negotiate.

Because of shortages and the absurdity of the present exchange rate, most of the Embassy food has to be imported.



SIR WILLIAM HAYTER.

led from Western Europe; while Sir William's Russian butler—a suave gentleman who admirably maintains the Wodehouse tradition of competent butlerdom—is imagined by many to be the senior Soviet secret service operative working in the Embassy itself. It is hardly surprising that Sir William's smile often has a sardonic twist.

Tobacco's Tax Man

IT is difficult to dislike Sir Robert Sinclair. He is small, neat, unassuming, and immensely capable. He is public-

spirited without being priggish, a keen sportsman and an earnest pipe-smoker with an air of rusticity.

In fact Sir Robert, who is chairman of the Imperial Tobacco Company, seems destined to go down in history as one of the greatest tax-collectors of all time.

The amount of tobacco duty paid by his company to the Government, and recouped from British smokers, is a trade secret; but if, as some experts have judged, the Imperial Tobacco Company sells three-quarters of all the tobacco used in this country, the figure cannot have fallen far short of £500 million last year. If Mr. Macmillan's estimates are right, Sir Robert will be paying, and collecting, an extra £30 million during the next twelve months.

Whenever the smoking-cancer controversy is raised, Sir Robert and his lieutenants can console themselves with the thought that they collect enough money to pay for the whole of our National Health Service.

Russian Reading

WHEN the time comes for exchanging gifts with our Soviet visitors, I hope that they are handed a copy of the first volume of Sir Winston Churchill's "A History of the English-Speaking Peoples." And for good measure we might throw in a set of Sir Winston's war memoirs.

A friend of mine recently looked at Sir Winston's card in the index of the Leningrad Library, which holds the largest collection of British books (400,000 volumes) in the Soviet Union. Sir Winston's works are represented there by two volumes of his war-time speeches; "The Story of the Malakand Field Force" (1898); "The River War" (1899); "London to Ladysmith via Pretoria"

PEOPLE and THINGS: By ATTICUS

(1900); and a pamphlet extolling the virtues of free trade which was published in 1906.

Flying Together

THE new co-pilots of B.O.A.C. have both spent much time with their feet off the ground. Sir George Cribbitt, the full-time deputy chairman, earned his wings at the end of world war one. Mr. Gerard d'Eranger, the part-time chairman, has crammed rather "more flying hours into his glamorous career. Since he first took to the air in 1928 he has flown sixty different types of aircraft; and I doubt whether many of the Corporation's active pilots can equal this mark.

When Mr. d'Eranger left the chairmanship of B.E.A. in 1949 he did not mince his words. "I have disagreed with the Ministry of Civil Aviation quite a few times on matters of policy, and I suppose that this is the reason for my dismissal." He then accused the Ministry of "messing about with Britain's air industry."

Mr. d'Eranger should have much to discuss with his deputy chairman. For the last ten years Sir George Cribbitt has been Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Dark Blue Designs

A NEW small car is now being designed in Oxford by Mr. Alec Issigonis, the man who visualised and constructed—largely by hand—the first prototype of the very successful Morris Minor.

It will not be surprising if this new car has a distinctly cosmopolitan appeal and a particular virtues for the export market. Mr. Issigonis was born in Turkey. He lives in Oxford with his Austrian mother; and his father was a Greek shipowner.

This new People's Car will probably be equipped with something very novel in the way of suspension. Alec Issigonis, who has always been a believer in self-damping springing systems, once made—and raced—a small car that had rubber springs. The unveiling date for this new creation is still a closely guarded secret.

Outside Right

FRENCH newspapers are almost as inscrutable to an outsider, as French political parties.

When faced, for instance, with "Le Temps de Paris," of which the first issue appeared last Tuesday afternoon, an English reader would note, first, how strikingly its format and make-up are based upon those of a popular London evening paper. Its claim to be "serious, but not austere" was borne out on Tuesday by an analysis of

Princess Grace's handwriting and the first instalment of an historical romance.

Politically speaking, "Le Temps de Paris" plays on the extreme right-wing, and if the liquor and lipstick advertisements do not quite stifle the prevailing aroma of Vichy this is not surprising; for, of the Editor's two chief henchmen, one worked in the temporary capital with Pierre Laval, and

the other with the even more odious Déat.

A Gallant Casualty

MANY readers will remember, and some may have profited by, last year's campaign against the book ring which was taken up with great vigour in this column and elsewhere. The initial shot in the campaign was fired by "Desiderata"; and I was very sorry

to hear that this fearless little organ is now to cease publication. Though primarily a link between library and bookseller, "Desiderata" prided itself also on its literary content. Sir Desmond MacCarthy was, I believe, one of the first to remark that articles of high interest and general concern were sandwiched between requests for "How to Asphalt Roads" (Wigan, 1876), and

"Germanische Formgefühl bei Gerard Manley Hopkins."

In the case of the ring, the concern proved too general by half: fingers, the editor tells me, cancelled their subscriptions to a man, but of the anti-ringers "only an insignificant minority" gave any practical support. The 429th issue of "Desiderata" is therefore the last. It deserves a salute.

Running for Money

LORD ALEXANDER's recent suggestion that the Olympic Games should be open to professional as well as amateur athletes has roused a storm of controversy in the United States. Countless columnists have been busy reminding "the noble Lord" that Greece and Rome fell because their athletes performed for pay.

Mr. Avery Brundage, the American President of the International Olympic Committee, has launched a fresh drive to eliminate the side-payment of star athletes and other aspects of sham amateurism.

Riding for a Fall

On this side of the Atlantic I expect that the Olympic equestrian events which are to be held at Stockholm on June 10-17 will raise a fresh burst of acrimonious argument. Many of the contestants will be avowed professionals by the standards of other sports and the rules governing this section of the Olympic Games are highly anomalous.

Women may compete in the jumping, but not in the three-day event. Winners of cash prizes can ride but they may not run. Corporals can run but they may not ride.

No soldier below the rank of sergeant may compete in the equestrian events, and it looks as though this provision will keep Alan Oliver out of our team. In 1952 he was our reserve at Helsinki, but when I last heard of him he was a lance-bombardier with the R.H.A. By the time that expert controversialists have examined all the ground rules there should be a fine flurry of international incidents.

All Done by Hand

PEOPLE so often complain of the decline in craftsmanship

that I am always glad to hear of cases in which automation as yet plays no part.

One of these is the firm of J. Y. Cowlishaw in Sheffield. In appearance a cutler's workshop of nineteenth- or even eighteenth-century design, and reached (it is on the fourth floor) by a rickety external wooden staircase, Messrs. Cowlishaw's is both owned, and staffed by octogenarians. "Half a sovereign" is still the accepted measure of currency in this distinguished den, where work goes forward at a stately pace and the floor undulates gently to the beat of anient machinery.

A Near-Jubilee

A few weeks ago a SUNDAY TIMES reader, Mr. P. Rooke Ley, had occasion to consult Mr.



MR. TAYLOR AT WORK.

Smith, the owner of Cowlishaw's, about a fruit-knife which had been made by his firm in 1907. Not only has the knife been returned to him "as good as new," but it has been repaired by Mr. Taylor, who made it at the same bench forty-nine years ago and immediately identified his mark upon it. Those who share my liking for fine hand-work may care to salute Mr. Taylor, who scoffs at the idea of retiring. He is only, after all, in his sixty-eighth year as a cutler.

Musical Honours

I DO not know if it was by chance that the band of the Coldstream Guards was playing the Elton Boating Song as our Russian visitors drove into the forecourt of Buckingham Palace last Thursday.

It was, at all events, to the strains of "Swing, swing together!" that they stepped in to sign the Visitors' Book.